



Published in final edited form as:

Appl Dev Sci. 2008 ; 12(4): 163–175. doi:10.1080/10888690802387880.

Excavating Culture: Disentangling Ethnic Differences from Contextual Influences in Parenting

Huynh-Nhu Le¹, Rosario Ceballo², Ruth Chao³, Nancy E. Hill⁴, Velma McBride Murry⁵, and Ellen E. Pinderhughes^{6,a}

¹George Washington University

²University of Michigan

³University of California, Riverside

⁴Duke University

⁵University of Georgia

⁶Tufts University

^aFollowing Le, all authors are listed in alphabetical order.

Abstract

Historically, much of the research on parenting has not disentangled the influences of race/ethnicity, SES, and culture on family functioning and the development of children and adolescents. This special issue addresses this gap by disentangling ethnic differences in parenting behaviors from their contextual influences, thereby deepening understanding of parenting processes in diverse families. Six members of the Parenting section of the Study Group on Race, Culture and Ethnicity (SGRCE) introduce and implement a novel approach toward understanding this question. The goal of this project is to study culturally related processes and the degree to which they predict parenting. An iterative process was employed to delineate the main parenting constructs (warmth, psychological and behavioral control, monitoring, communication, and self-efficacy), cultural processes, and contextual influences, and to coordinate a data analytic plan utilizing individual datasets with diverse samples to answer the research questions.

As the U.S. is becoming increasingly diverse, it is imperative that research on parenting and parent-child relations reflect this growing diversity. Historically, much of the research has not disentangled the influences of race, social class, and culture on family functioning and child development (Johnson, Jaeger, Randolph, Cauce, Ward, and the NICHD Research Network, 2003). Some investigators have begun to examine the unique and interactive influences of race and social class by including, in their study sample, families of color from various socioeconomic groups (e.g., Hill, 2001; Pinderhughes, Dodge, Bates, Pettit, & Zelli, 2000) or by examining families from diverse ethnic groups from similar community and economic backgrounds (e.g., Hill, Bush, & Roosa, 2003; Hill, Ramirez, & Dumka, 2003). However, most studies have not empirically examined the cultural characteristics and processes that underpin ethnic or racial group differences themselves. Many assertions about variations in “cultural” values are posthoc interpretations based on stereotypes or clinical

Presented as part of the Parenting Section of the Study Group on Race, Ethnicity and Culture

This project was presented at a Working Conference at Tufts University, April, 2005, along with papers by our colleagues in the Racial Socialization and Ethnic Identity Subgroup (Diane Hughes, Deborah Johnson, James Rodriguez, Emilie Phillips Smith, Paul Spicer, and Howard Stevenson). We thank them for their contributions to this work. Portions of this project were also presented at the Society for Research on Adolescence, March, 2006.

observations instead of empirically examined hypotheses regarding measured endorsement of specific cultural values. Moreover, there is a need to disentangle culture from groups' historical and social experiences, which leads to difficulty in identifying the specific influences that culture exerts on families and parenting processes (Brave Heart & Spicer, 2000; Jagers, 1996; McLoyd, Cauce, Takeuchi, & Wilson, 2000). Such knowledge about the unique and interactive roles of cultural values, socioeconomic and community backgrounds, and race and ethnicity has strong implications for targeting effective preventive and intervention efforts. However, much conceptual and empirical work remains to be done in this area.

The purpose of this project is to disentangle ethnic differences in parenting behaviors from their contextual influences, thereby deepening our understanding of parenting processes in diverse families. This is important for several reasons. First, much of the current research on parenting suggests that although there are some differences in parenting strategies among families of color, it is unclear how these families actually differ (McLoyd et al., 2000). This lack of clarity is in part due to at least two influences. The use of "European-American" families as the standard comparison group has been a major contributor to (mis)assumptions of ethnic group differences. Comparative work to identify mean level similarities and differences does not take into account that some of the same parenting strategies may have different meanings or may be based in different parenting goals (Mason, Walker-Barnes, Tu, Simons, & Martinez-Arree, 2004). In addition, variations in methodologies, measures, and/or samples have complicated our understanding of parenting among families of color. Studies are often based on different theories of parenting (e.g., authoritarian/authoritative versus specific strategies to show warmth or establish control), which results in different constructs and measures. Such differences create conceptual incompatibilities, making drawing conclusions across studies difficult if not impossible. The set of studies that comprise this special issue are based in a single theoretical foundation, resulting in similar constructs and measures, and analyses.

Second, previous work on ethnic variations in parenting, family dynamics and children's developmental outcomes often does not separate ethnicity from other demographic characteristics, such as community context and socioeconomic status (Graham, 1992; Roosa, Morgan-Lopez, Cree, & Specter, 2002). Some studies control for SES, others do not. Even when these demographic differences are controlled statistically, it is difficult to conclude with confidence that observed group differences are due to the underlying contributions of ethnicity and culture, rather than other differences, such as contextual processes (Hill, Bush, et al., 2003; Hill, Ramirez, et al., 2003). Ethnic minority families are more likely to live in neighborhoods with fewer community resources and that are less safe than European American families, even if the minority and European American families have similar economic backgrounds. Because much of the research confounds cultural or ethnic background with other sociodemographic factors such as socioeconomic status, community of residence, and minority status, it becomes difficult to determine how cultural practices affect family dynamics, including parenting (Hill, Murry, & Anderson, 2005). Disentangling ethnicity, culture, and contextual processes would significantly increase our understanding of how each uniquely relate to parenting practices, in particular, and family processes in general. Consistent with Hill, Murry, and Anderson (2005), and Sollors (1996), *ethnicity* here is viewed as representing shared practices, beliefs and values linked to "nationality, common ancestry, and/or immigration experiences" (Hill, Murry, & Anderson, 2006, p. 23). *Culture*, a dynamic phenomenon, represents ways of living that have been developed by a group of people to meet their biological, psychological and emotional needs. Transmitted intergenerationally, culture encompasses social norms, roles, beliefs, values and practices and serves to provide guidelines for the socialization of children and successful adult functioning (Hill, Murry, & Anderson, 2006; E. B. Pinderhughes, 1989; Rohner, 1984).

Thus, individuals from the same ethnic group may engage in culturally-based parenting practices that reflect their common history. In disentangling culture and ethnicity from context, the current set of studies carefully considers both economic and community contexts as they relate to parenting and controls for them in similar ways across studies, before concluding that differences in parenting may be due to ethnicity or cultural background.

This monograph is the culmination of a collaboration among six members of the “Parenting” section of the Study Group on Race, Culture and Ethnicity (SGRCE), relying upon each member’s datasets to utilize a-priori defined constructs and analyses. In these combined analyses, we take a first step towards disentangling ethnic and contextual influences in parenting. We provide a brief overview of current conceptualization of specific parenting practices, highlighting the importance of placing parenting “in context:” the overarching theme that informed and framed our research questions as well and guided the methodology implementation. In the following section, we present the theoretical basis and empirical findings that guide the focus of our project.

Conceptualization of Parenting

Historically, parenting has been conceptualized in multiple ways in an attempt to describe the variety of behaviors that parents engage in with their children (e.g., Barber, Stolz, & Olsen, 2005; Darling & Steinberg, 1993; Stewart & Bond, 2002). These different dimensions, typologies, and styles have consistently pointed to two important goals for parenting – including managing children’s behavior and facilitating internalization of family and culturally related mores regarding appropriate functioning. These goals typically (although not solely) are met through parental warmth, control (psychological and behavioral control), and monitoring. These remain the central dimensions of parenting (Barber et al., 2005) and thus were selected as the core parenting strategies in this special issue.

Parental warmth

It is often defined as the supportive component of parenting and includes demonstrating affection, nurturance, compassion, and a positive evaluation towards one’s children (Barber et al., 2005). In the most widely used assessments of parenting, parental warmth is operationalized by behaviors such as helping one’s child feel better when s/he is sad or scared, providing care and attention, and enjoying time spent together, encompasses developmentally appropriate expressions of physical and emotional affection and emotional support or responsiveness. Parental warmth is one of the two cornerstone qualities in authoritative parenting (e.g., Baumrind, 1971). Further, some theorists purport that warmth facilitates the effectiveness of other parenting strategies (e.g., Darling & Steinberg, 1993). Warmth and expressions of love are associated with secure attachment in infancy and emotional security throughout childhood, which are consistently related to adaptive functioning and healthy development (e.g., Ainsworth, 1974; Cummings & Davies, 1996; Main, Kaplan, & Cassidy, 1985; Sroufe, 1983). The expression of parental warmth is largely consistent across developmental stages. Some research suggests that parental warmth varies across socioeconomic status and ethnicity, such that parents from lower socioeconomic background and/or who are ethnic minorities express less warmth toward their children than do parents from higher SES and ethnic majority backgrounds (Hoff-Ginsberg, Laursen, & Tardiff, 2005; McLoyd, 1990; Pinderhughes et al., 2000). Further, looking across ethnicity, families residing in less safe neighborhoods, regardless of their ethnic background have been shown to express less warmth than other families (Furstenburg, et al., 1993). Although qualitative research supports that families from diverse ethnic and socioeconomic

backgrounds love and care for their children (e.g., Lareau, 2003), the ways in which they do so may differ (e.g., Hill, Bush, & Roosa, 2003; Mason et al., 2004).

Psychological and behavioral control are two additional key aspects of parenting associated with externalizing and internalizing problems in youth. *Psychological control*, on the one hand, involves strategies that parents engage in to manage the child's emotional or psychological processes (Barber, 1996) and includes love-oriented techniques (e.g., love-withdrawal; Sears, Maccoby, & Levin, 1957), as well as the use of guilt induction and shaming. The extant literature on psychological control consistently indicates a negative impact of high levels of psychological control on self-esteem, psychosocial immaturity and internalizing problems (e.g., Pettit, Laird, Dodge, Bates, & Criss, 2001; Steinberg, Elmen, & Mounts, 1989). These patterns are known to exist for adolescents (see Barber & Harmon, 2002, for extensive discussion) and young adults (e.g., Seibel & Johnson, 2001). More recent attention to younger children suggests a similar negative impact (Aunola & Nurmi, 2005; Morris, Steinberg, Sessa, Avenevoli, Silk, & Essex, 2002). The negative impact has been found across race (e.g., Bean, Bush, McKenry, & Wilson, 2003), and irrespective of respondent (e.g., Barber & Harmon, 2002; Bean et al., 2003). *Behavioral control*, on the other hand, involves the communication and enforcement of rules, regulations and restrictions set by parents to manage the child's behavioral functioning (e.g., Smetana & Daddis, 2002). Insufficient behavioral control has been identified as a contributor to youths' externalizing behavior problems (e.g., Barber, Stolz, & Olson, 2005; Barnes, Reifman, Farrell, & Dintcheff, 2000; Herman, Dornbusch, Herron, & Herting, 1997). This pattern has been found across race (e.g., Galambos, Barker, & Almeida, 2003; Smetana, Crean, & Daddis, 2002; WalkerBarnes & Mason, 2001) and irrespective of respondent (e.g., Galambos et al., 2003; Smetana et al., 2002).

Parental monitoring is also a critical component of effective parenting during childhood, and especially during adolescence (Brody, Murry, Kim, & Brown, 2002; Laird, Pettit, Dodge, & Bates, 2003; Spera, 2005). Parental monitoring has been defined in two ways: (a) parental management style, in which parents play an active role in supervising their child's whereabouts, including structuring the child or adolescent's home, school, and community environments and tracking the child's behavior in these environments (Dishion & McMahon, 1998; Stattin & Kerr, 2000), and (b) parental knowledge regarding the child's whereabouts, activities, and friends (for a review, see Hayes, Hudson, & Matthews, 2003). This research has consistently demonstrated that high levels of monitoring are associated with positive child outcomes for youth, irrespective of contextual influences (e.g., Laird et al., 2003; Luthar & Becker, 2002). This research appears to be consistent across ethnicity and in low and middle income families, including African American, Asian American, Latino, and European American youth (e.g., Forehand, Miller, Dutra, & Chance, 1997; Gorman-Smith, Tolan, Zelli, & Huessman, 1996; Richards, Miller, O'Donnell, Wasserman, & Colder, 2005). For example, poor parental monitoring is directly linked with child and adolescent antisocial behavior, and with other behavioral problems, such as substance abuse, and low self-esteem (Dishion & McMahon, 1998; Laird et al., 2003), as well as poor school achievement (Brody, Stoneman, & Flor, 1995; Spera, 2005). Moreover, parental monitoring can play an important role in buffering children from the deleterious effects of neighborhood risks, such as the impact of community violence exposure on children's psychological well-being (Ceballo, Ramirez, Hearn, & Matese, 2003).

There are also developmental and gender differences in parental monitoring. Whereas parents of children are more likely to monitor their children's behavior through direct observation, parents of adolescents are more likely to monitor their adolescents' behavior through indirect means, including verbal rules for acceptable behavior, and/or questions about their whereabouts (Hayes et al., 2003). Over time, parents report monitoring younger

children and adolescents more than older adolescents, and girls more than boys – which is consistent with older adolescents' increased need for independence and autonomy, and perceived lower risk for problem behaviors in girls than boys, respectively (Richards et al., 2005; Weintraub & Gold, 1991).

Communication

Internalization of family and cultural mores and behavioral management are facilitated not only by parental warmth, but also by parent-child communication (Murry et al., 2005). Effective and high quality communication facilitates children's and adolescents' feelings of security and attachment, thereby improving the overall quality of parent-child relationships. Communication is essential for effective discipline, including the establishment of rules, expectations, and consequences and for the use of reasoning as a strategy for increasing the internalization of rules and standards. Moreover, children and adolescents come to understand appropriate standards of behavior and adult roles through communication. Among disciplinary strategies, induction is more effective, relative to power assertion and love withdrawal (see review by Grych, 2002). Key elements of induction include parental communication of expectations and reasoning.

Developmental and ethnic differences are apparent in the research on family communication. Whereas the quality of communication remains important throughout childhood and adolescence, there are marked changes in communication patterns as children transition to adolescence. Research on parent-child communication among younger children often focuses on the development of negotiation skills (e.g., Klimes-Dougan & Kopp, 1999), the use of communication between parents and young children to support early language and cognitive development (Thompson, 2006, special issue of *Merrill-Palmer Quarterly*), and in the development of the attachment relationship (Grych, 2002). In contrast, by adolescence, research on parent-child communication focuses almost exclusively on the pervasiveness of parent-adolescent conflict (Montemayor, 1986) and declines in self-disclosure to parents (e.g., Norrell, 1984). Further, across ethnicity, the nature of parent-child relations have been documented with African American parent-child dyads demonstrating more direct communication styles compared to European American, and Asian American families (Gonzales et al., 1996). These ethnic differences were particularly pronounced if the observational coders were not ethnically matched to the parent-child dyad.

Despite ethnic differences in communication styles and developmental differences in the function and purposes of parent-child communication, the quality of communication remains associated with developmental outcomes (e.g., Barnes & Olsen, 1985). For this investigation, we focused on the *quality of communication* – frequency of parent-child discussions and the degree of positive and negative exchanges during discussions – because quality exchanges are necessary for promoting healthy parent-child relationships and other developmental outcomes.

Parental Self-Efficacy

A final construct included in this project is parental *self-efficacy*. Although this has not been a central parenting strategy, parental self-efficacy is important to consider because it is a major base for parental practices (Bandura, 1997) and critical for understanding personal satisfaction or adjustment to parenting and the quality of the physical and psychological environment that parents are able to provide for their children (Coleman & Karraker, 1997). Based in Social Cognitive Theory (Bandura, 1977, 1997), it is defined as parents' beliefs and expectations in the degree to which they can perform competently and effectively as parents (Teti & Gelfand, 1991; for reviews, see Coleman & Karraker, 1997 and Montigny & Lacharité, 2005). Parents who feel more efficacious may devote more energy to the

parenting task; in turn, they are likely to become more effective parents (Hess, Teti, & Hussey-Gardner, 2004). Thus, parental self-efficacy can also be defined as one's perceived ability to have a positive influence on the behavior and development of one's children (Teti, O'Connell, & Reiner, 1996). A growing body of research has linked parental (typically maternal) self-efficacy beliefs to parenting competence (e.g., Sanders & Woolley, 2005; Teti & Gelfand, 1991), positive parenting practices (Brody, Flor, & Gibson, 1999), and positive child outcomes, such as improved socio-emotional development (Strand & Wahler, 1996) and school achievement (Elder, Eccles, Ardel, & Lord, 1995). This research spans from parents of young infants to school age children and has been applied to different ethnic groups, including Latino and African American parents (e.g., Brody et al., 1999; Zayas et al., 2005).

Whereas this investigation examines warmth, psychological and behavioral control, monitoring, communication, and parental self efficacy singly, as they are influenced by cultural and contextual factors, the fact that they are interrelated, co-occur, and influence each other (e.g., Barber et al., 2005) is understood. In addition, although many studies have examined these constructs using operational definitions that emphasize different nuances, there is general consistency and agreement in the field on the general operational definitions of these parenting constructs and their importance for understanding parenting and child development. However, for clarity of purpose, our operational definitions are as follows:

Warmth – is defined by expressions of physical and emotional support and love. *Behavioral Control* – consists of strategies to manage child's behavioral functioning through the use of rules, regulations, and expectations and the consistent enforcement of these rules and regulations.

Psychological Control – includes strategies to manage children's emotional or psychological processes and the use of maternal psychological and emotional processes to manage behavior (e.g., shaming, guilt, love withdrawal).

Monitoring – represents parental supervision and knowledge of the child's whereabouts, activities and friends.

Communication – refers to the frequency of discussions and degree of positive and negative exchanges during discussions.

Parental Self Efficacy – is defined as a parent's rating of perceived ability to be a competent parent.

Gender Effects of Child and Parent

There has been a longstanding interest in understanding the effect of a child's gender and a parent's gender on parenting and socialization processes (Maccoby & Jacklin, 1974; for reviews, see McHale, Crouter, & Whiteman, 2003 and Maccoby, 2003). This body of research suggests that, with few exceptions, mothers and fathers are likely to treat boys and girls more similarly than differently (Lytton & Romney, 1991). We recognize that there are gender specific findings (e.g., mothers use more supportive speech with girls than boys; Leaper, 2002) and that understanding fathering has appropriately received increased attention (e.g., Parke, 1996). Because most of the caregivers in our studies were mothers, as mothers are usually more likely to be involved in daily activities with their (especially young) children (Maccoby, 2003), this investigation focused on primarily on mothers as parents. Some datasets did include children's reports of fathers; however, none of the datasets included fathers' reports of themselves. Also, because the focus is on parenting as an outcome variable rather than child outcomes, child gender was not included in the

analyses. Separate examinations of gender of child and parent are beyond the scope of this investigation.

Parenting in Context

Cultural, ecological, social, and historical factors shape parenting beliefs and practices (e.g., Belsky, 1983; Bronfenbrenner & Crouter, 1983; Garcia Coll et al., 1996; Hoff-Ginsberg & Tardiff, 1995). Although integrative and contextual models of family dynamics and human development (e.g., developmental contextualism, Lerner, 1991; & ecological systems theory, Bronfenbrenner & Crouter, 1983) often consider culture as an ecosystem or macrosystem construct that affects parenting indirectly through more proximal factors, more recent theories have begun to consider ethnicity and culture as an endogenous or proximal factor (e.g., Integrative Theory for the Study Minority Children, Garcia Coll, et al., 1996; & the Developmental Niche Theory, Super & Harkness, 1996). Rather than situating the influence of cultural factors in the “outer ring” of influences, as is often done in the Ecological Systems and Developmental Contextualist theories, Garcia Coll’s theory conceptualizes culture and “adaptive cultural practices” as including both the traditions and legacies of culture and the mechanisms through which culture adapts to the effects of social stratification, which are more pronounced for ethnic minority children. Further, rather than conceptualizing the influence of culture as a distal factor in understanding children’s development, Garcia Coll et al. (1996) proposed that “adaptive cultural practices” influence parenting and child development directly and in some cases mediates the influences of social stratification on the development of children’s competencies. The adaptive cultural practices are influenced by social stratification and environmental factors and may buffer the influence of contextual factors on parenting. The Developmental Niche Theory (Super & Harkness, 1996) describes culture as directly influencing parenting by shaping beliefs about appropriate or effective child rearing practices, the nature and needs of children, and parental and community endorsed developmental goals for children. Mean level differences in parenting across ethnicity have been found, especially between ethnic minorities and European Americans. Ethnic minorities, including Asian Americans, African Americans, Native Americans and Latinos, have each been found to value interdependence and extended family (Meyer & Brillion, 1995), and these values are associated with higher levels of authoritarian, directive, and no nonsense parenting (Brody & Flor, 1998; Chao, 1994, 2001; Hill, Bush, et al., 2003). Although very little research has examined ethnic variations in the *predictors* of parenting, one recent study found that the relation between socioeconomic predictors and parenting varied across ethnicity (Hill & Adams, 2005). Specifically, contextual factors such as family risk indicators explained socioeconomic variations in parenting among African Americans, but not European Americans.

In addition to ethnicity, contextual factors such as socioeconomic status, neighborhood characteristics, maternal stress, and mental health also impact parenting. Broad theories and research of socioeconomic status find that parenting varies based on parental education level, family income, and occupational prestige (Hoff-Ginsberg & Tardiff, 1995). Moreover, poverty and economic hardship often have deleterious effects on parenting and family dynamics (Brody et al., 2001; Conger, Conger, & Elder, 1997; McLoyd, 1990; Murry et al., 2002). Across ethnicity, economic hardship is associated with the use of harsh and inconsistent discipline and lower levels of warmth (Hoff-Ginsberg & Tardiff, 1995; Pinderhughes et al., 2000), in part due to the influence of poverty and economic hardship on parents’ mental health, stress, and marital relations. Poverty and environmental stressors, such as negative life events and decreased social support, can decrease levels of maternal efficacy among rural African American families (Brody et al., 1999) and low-income urban minority women (Zayas, Janskowski, & McKee, 2005).

Relatedly, unsafe and impoverished neighborhoods with few resources often undermine parenting (Leventhal & Brooks-Gunn, 2000). Neighborhood safety, social involvement, social disorder, and collective socialization processes are linked with maternal warmth/involvement, supervision, and discipline (Brody et al., 2001; Coulton, Korbin, Sue, & Chow, 1995; Garbarino & Crouter, 1978; Klebanov, Brooks-Gunn, & Duncan, 1994; O'Neil, Parke, & McDowell, 2001; Parke, Burks, Carson, Neville, & Boyum, 1994; Sampson & Laub, 1994; Simons, Johnson, Beaman, Conger, & Whitbeck, 1996). Parents often compensate for the effect of neighborhood disadvantages on child outcomes by increasing monitoring and employing firm disciplinary strategies (Baldwin, Baldwin, & Cole, 1990; Brody et al., 2001; Sampson & Groves, 1989). The relations between neighborhood characteristics and parenting have been found across ethnicities (e.g., Ceballo & McLoyd, 2002; Hill & Herman-Stahl, 2002; Pinderhughes, Nix, Foster, Jones, & the Conduct Problems Prevention Research Group, 2001), and the processes are often mediated by parental mental health (Hill & Herman-Stahl, 2002).

Although ethnicity, socioeconomic factors, neighborhood characteristics, and other contextual factors are consistently related to parenting, much of the research on parenting and family dynamics among ethnic minority families has confounded ethnicity with contextual factors such as socioeconomic status and neighborhood characteristics (Cauce, Coronado, & Watson, 1998; Roosa et al., 2002). In comparative research, ethnic minority samples often come from significantly lower socioeconomic levels and reside in more disadvantaged neighborhoods (e.g., Duncan & Aber, 1997). Even more affluent ethnic minority families, on average, reside in neighborhoods with fewer resources (Wilson, 1987) and have lower levels of wealth than European American families (Darity & Nicholson, 2005). Because neighborhood characteristics and socioeconomic status are each related to parenting, quite apart from culture and ethnicity, confounding ethnic and contextual variables undermines our ability to draw firm conclusions about the relative and interactive effects of ethnicity, culture, and contextual factors on parenting and family dynamics. Whereas many studies examine and report ethnic variations in parenting, it is equally plausible that the findings could be explained by contextual factors that are not included in the analyses.

When examining the influence of culture or ethnicity on parenting and family dynamics, it is important to attempt to distinguish influences that are due to cultural experiences and those which may be due to contextual factors or factors related to being an "outgroup" in American society including experiences of discrimination, and a higher probability of economic disadvantage (Hill et al., 2005). Common experiences of social disadvantage across ethnic minority families may result in a "minority culture," which in turn influences parenting and family dynamics. Many studies include only a single ethnic minority group compared with European Americans and explanations of differences in parenting are often based on cultural assumptions post hoc without actually measuring culture. Only by examining parenting across multiple ethnic groups simultaneously and considering factors related to ethnic minority experiences in the United States (such as social stratification variables) can we begin to disentangle the effects of culture or ethnicity. For example, when parenting practices of ethnic minority families are compared to those of European American families, we often find across studies that ethnic minority families are more authoritarian than are the European American families (Hill et al., 2005). Given the many cultural differences among African Americans, Asians, Latinos, and Native Americans, it is unlikely that these parenting differences relative to European Americans are due solely to culture (Hill et al., 2005). The question remains as to whether ethnic variations in parenting practices are indeed due to differences in underlying cultural values (e.g., ethnic identity, ethnic socialization, acculturation, immigration status) or to common experiences of living in the United States for ethnic minorities. If ethnic differences remain after other contextual

factors are controlled, firmer conclusions about the influence of culture on parenting can be made. More precisely, once contextual factors are controlled, if remaining ethnic variations in parenting are related in expected ways to measures of families' endorsement of cultural values, we can be even more confident in conclusions about the role of culture in understanding variations in parenting.

Specific Research Questions

Our goal is to study culturally related processes and the degree to which they predict parenting. Specifically, our three research questions are

1. Are there ethnic differences in parenting that remain when contextual variables are controlled AND are related to culture?
2. Are there ethnic differences in parenting that remain when contextual factors are in the model but are not related to cultural factors?
3. Are ethnic differences in parenting explained only by contextual factors?

Methodology

Consensus of Defining Parenting Constructs, Cultural and Contextual Variables

Overview—A particular strength of this project is that by carefully coordinating the analyses across datasets, we can resolve some differences in study designs by instituting similar operational definitions, systematically controlling for certain factors, and arriving at more robust approaches to answering our research questions. Specifically, the above research questions arose through an iterative process, coordinated among the six members of the Parenting section of the Study Group on Race, Culture, and Ethnicity. A number of steps were taken to coordinate the data analytic plan. First, we identified the key parenting constructs of interest in our samples of diverse developmental stages (from infancy to late adolescence). Second, we determined the extent to which each dataset had items that represented the main parenting constructs, cultural processes, and contextual variables. Third, we reviewed individual items in each dataset in order to create new scales representing the agreed upon parenting constructs, which were derived by consensus. Fourth, each investigator examined the reliability of these new scales in their datasets and deleted those items that did not meet standard internal consistency criteria (i.e., Cronbach's alpha levels < .60). Fifth, we proceeded with individual analyses of each dataset using our agreed upon data analytic plan.

The collection of studies represented highly diverse samples. The ethnic groups included in this investigation are: (a) Asian and Asian American (Chao); (b) African American (Ceballo, Chao, Hill, Murry, Pinderhughes); (c) Latino (Ceballo, Chao, Le); and (d) European American (Ceballo, Chao, Hill, Pinderhughes). Although all datasets include parents (primarily mothers), the ages of children across the six datasets range from infancy through adolescence. Samples range in number from 40 to nearly 3,000 respondents; some datasets have parent and child/youth respondents as well as other sources of data, whereas other datasets have only parent respondents. Across the samples, respondents live in virtually all geographic regions of the U.S. After describing our measurement process in further detail, summaries of the method and results from each individual study will be presented.

Constructs and Variables—The main parenting outcomes include: warmth, psychological control, behavioral control, monitoring, communication (quality and frequency), and parental self-efficacy. Table 1 outlines which datasets have items that assess the targeted parenting constructs during each developmental period. Individual items that comprise the parenting constructs by dataset are available from the respective authors.

Because this investigation was based on existing datasets, the original studies that produced these datasets differed in their goals, methodologies, and measurement. Details on each dataset's design, sample, and methodology are presented in the individual reports that follow this chapter. Although a strength of this collaborative approach is that it allows for the examination of research questions using samples that represent diverse ethnic groups, regions of the country, urbanicity, and socioeconomic status in a way that might not be possible otherwise, it also presents a challenge in that our measures may not be directly comparable.

To assure that items and measures were comparable and adequately represented the constructs, we conducted an item level assessment to determine the extent to which each dataset had items that reflected the parenting dimensions that were the focus of this investigation. Each item assessing parenting constructs from each dataset was examined individually (not as part of their original scales) to determine whether it reflected one of the parenting construct's operational definition. To increase validity of the assignment of items to constructs, two investigators' research teams separately examined the parenting items from all of the datasets and determined whether it reflected their assigned constructs. Pinderhughes' and Hill's research teams separately examined all parenting items from each dataset to identify items that reflected *Behavioral Control*, *Psychological Control*, and *Communication* (quality/frequency and *Socialization Messages*); Ceballo's and Chao's research teams separately examined all parenting items from each dataset to identify items that reflected *Warmth* and *Monitoring*; and Le's and Murry's research teams identified items reflecting *Parental Self Efficacy*, *Parental Satisfaction*, and *Developmental Goals*.

After each research team separately identified items reflected their assigned constructs, the teams met and discussed each construct. Items for which there was agreement (i.e., both research teams identified them as representing the same parenting construct) were used to reflect the construct within each dataset. Disagreements on whether an item represented a construct were discussed between the two research teams and with the larger Parenting group to reach a consensus. Once items representing each construct were identified for each dataset, reliability analyses were conducted within each dataset. A standard of .60 was established. Sets of items that met this criterion for reliability were used to reflect the construct within each dataset and scale scores were calculated. For sets of items that did not reach the .60 criterion, item-total correlations were examined to determine whether the scale could be improved by removing a single item. If the scale could not be improved, it was eliminated from the analyses. Using this process, the parenting constructs of *Socialization Messages* and *Developmental Goals* were eliminated from the analyses because it became clear that the items did not reflect the same construct across datasets. Although these items reflected part of the constructs/variables for capturing cultural processes in some of the datasets, they were often capturing cultural features that were not comparable (e.g., the former was for capturing underlying messages involving parental control, and the latter for capturing explicit parental goals or expectations). In addition, we eliminated *Parental Satisfaction* from the analyses because only one dataset had items reflecting this construct. Whereas the use of existing datasets resulted in the use of different items to assess each construct, this process of inter-rater assessments and agreement on whether items reflect the targeted construct resulted in face validity of the constructs and increased confidence that different items used across the datasets reflected the same underlying parenting construct.

We also examined our datasets to identify contextual and cultural variables. Selection of contextual variables involved the examination of individual items from each dataset to determine which construct (e.g., neighborhood, SES) it represented. Discussions about each item were held and consensus reached among all six group members during a two-day

meeting. For cultural variables, the process differed slightly. Items assessing religiosity and immigrant status/acclulturation were discussed and consensus reached by the full group. The selection of items to assess ethnic identity and racial socialization drew from the process adopted by our SGRCE colleagues in the Racial/Ethnic Socialization and Ethnic Identity Section for achieving consensus on these constructs (Hughes et al., 2006). They chose the subscale level for consensus. Thus, a priori subscales from extant measures of racial/ethnic identity and racial/ethnic socialization were used.

Among the contextual variables, all datasets included assessments of socioeconomic status and all but 2 datasets included assessments of life stress and neighborhood characteristics (Table 2). Three datasets included assessments of psychiatric risk, such as maternal depression.

Among the cultural variables, all of the datasets included assessments of ethnicity, typically a self reported question or questions assessing ethnic and/or racial background. Biracial and multi-racial families were not included in the analyses (Table 3). Datasets that included Latinos and Asian Americans (e.g. Ceballo, Chao, and Le) assessed acculturation, immigration status, and language preferences. Datasets that included African Americans and European Americans assessed mothers' level of racial or ethnic identity and/or the extent to which mothers' socialize their children about race and ethnicity. In addition, three datasets assessed religiosity. We included religiosity as a cultural variable because for some ethnic groups (e.g., African Americans), culture and religiosity can be closely intertwined.

Plan of Analysis—Prior to conducting the regression analyses, bivariate correlations were conducted for all the predictors of interest to examine the possibility of multi-collinearity. Due to space restrictions, significant correlations are reported in the text or as footnotes within each study. To determine if ethnicity predicts parenting outcome when taking into account contextual factors, hierarchical regression analyses were conducted with ethnicity entered first as a dummy coded variable, and contextual variables entered second. These sets of analyses pertain to datasets with multiple ethnic groups. For datasets where ethnic differences were significant, follow-up within group analyses were conducted, as described below.

For those datasets with one ethnic group, hierarchical regressions were conducted with cultural process variables entered first, and contextual variables entered second to determine if cultural processes still predict to parenting outcome.

Overview of Results

In this section, each of the six individual research reports (unique methodology, sample description, and results) will be presented, followed by a summary of results across all the datasets. These individual reports are products of each Parenting Subgroup member and her respective collaborators. Ceballo and Hurd report on a sample of 104 Latina, European American, and African American mothers who are parenting fourth or fifth grade children. Their analyses focused on Parental Monitoring, Warmth, Psychological Control, and Parental Self-Efficacy. Chao and Kanatsu present findings from a sample of almost 3,000 Asian American, European American, African American and Latino adolescents who report on their parents' *Monitoring*, *Warmth*, and *Behavioral Control*. Hill and Tyson report on a sample of 103 African American and European American mothers and their children who were interviewed when the children were in kindergarten and again in fourth grade. They conducted analyses on *Warmth*, *Psychological Control*, *Behavioral Control*, and *Communication*. Le and Lambert present findings from a sample of 40 Latina mothers with young infants, focusing on maternal *self-efficacy*. Murry, Brody, Cutrona, Gibbons, and

Simons report on findings from two samples of rural African American families: 152 single mothers with a child age 7-16, and 897 parents raising a 10 or 11 year old child. With two and three waves of data, respectively, they conducted analyses on *Monitoring*, *Warmth*, and *Communication*. Pinderhughes, Hurley, and the Conduct Problems Prevention Research Group report findings from an 11-year longitudinal study with a sample of 368 African American and European American parents. Data on parenting were used from the following grades: Kindergarten, first, second, fourth, fifth, seventh, eighth, ninth, and tenth. Analyses focused on *Monitoring*, *Warmth*, *Behavioral Control*, and *Communication*.

Following the presentations of the six individual research reports, Ana Mari Cauce concludes with a commentary on this project, encouraging ways to increase scientific understanding of the linkages among ethnicity, culture, context and parenting.

Acknowledgments

Work on this project was funded in part by the National Science Foundation (346405), Pennsylvania State University, and Tufts University.

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Table 1

Parenting constructs

	Warmth	Psychological Control	Behavioral Control	Monitoring	Communication	Parental Self-Efficacy
Infancy						Le ^w
K-3 rd grade	Hill ^{w, a} Pinderh ^a	Hill ^{w, a}	Hill ^{w, a} Pinderh ^{a *}		Hill ^{w, a} Pinderh ^{a *}	Hill ^{w, a} Pinderh ^a
4-6 th grade	Hill ^{w, a} Pinderh ^a Murry ^w Ceballo ^{w, a}	Hill ^{w, a} Ceballo ^{w, a}	Hill ^{w, a} Pinderh ^{a *}	Pinderh ^{a *} Murry ^w Ceballo ^{w, a}	Hill ^{w, a} Pinderh ^a Murry ^w	Hill ^{w, a} Pinderh ^a Ceballo ^{w, a}
7-8 th grade	Pinderh ^{w, a} Murry ^w		Pinderh ^{a *}	Pinderh ^{w, a} Murry ^{w, a}	Pinderh ^{w, a} Murry ^w	
9-12 th grade	Pinderh ^{w, a *} Murry ^w Chao ^{w, a}	Chao ^{w, a}	Chao ^{w, a}	Pinderh ^{w, a *} Murry ^w Chao ^{w, a}	Pinderh ^{w, a} Murry ^w	

Notes: w = within group comparisons within a dataset; a = multigroup comparisons within a dataset; Pinderh = Pinderhughes

* In these cases, data are available for only specific years during the given age period.

Table 2

Contextual Variables

	SES: Education /Occupation/ Employment status/Household composition/home ownership	Economic stress	Life events Stress measure	Psychiatric risk	Neighborhood (overall quality, danger, incivility, collective efficacy network)
Ceballo	X		X		X
Chao	X				
Hill	X		X	X	X
Le	X			X	
Murry	X	X	X		X
Pinderhughes	X		X	X	X

Table 3

Cultural Variables

	Immigrant-related (birthplace, age immigrate to the US, # years in US, child born in US, language fluency/acclturation)	Religiosity	Racial/Ethnic identity	Racial/Ethnic socialization
Ceballo	X	X		
Chao	X			
Hill			X	X
Le	X			
Murry		X	X	X
Pinderhughes		X		X